

Washington, DC – Today Congressman Joe Sestak (D-PA) issued the following statement in support of Pennsylvania State House Bill 1182, introduced by Representatives Bryan Lentz, Ron Raymond and others that would create a southeastern Pennsylvania Regional Airport Authority and allow it to operate the Philadelphia International and Lehigh Valley Airports. It would also provide funding for this new organization. — “I support this legislation because it ensures fairness in who has authority over the Philadelphia International Airport, three-quarters of which is located in Delaware County yet is controlled solely by the City of Philadelphia. Passage of this legislation would ensure, for example, that the unfair and poorly-done FAA airspace redesign proposal would not be implemented because concerns of citizens affected by the proposal would have to be taken into consideration. Hopefully, passage of this legislation will help stop the FAA’s airspace redesign proposal.

Pennsylvania is the only state in northeastern U.S. without a regional airport authority to control its airports and airfields. New York, New Jersey and Boston all have control over their airports. This bill is another good effort to ensure that the process is treated fairly and that the residents of Delaware County have a voice, but there is more that can and must be done. That is why I am also pursuing other options, including working with Congressman Rob Andrews (D-NJ) to have the GAO, Congress’s watchdog, investigate the FAA’s proposed redesign of the airspace covering the New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia region due to community concerns that noise mitigation, air emissions, and other environmental impacts may not have been adequately addressed. And I intend to continue working on other options, such as legislation and support for the Delaware County Council’s plan for litigation, to ensure that any impact on the safety, health, education, and property values of Delaware County residents as a result of the FAA Airspace Redesign are fully identified and mitigated, and that all noise and its impact on Delaware County residents is eliminated.

Air travel will continue to increase dramatically over the next few years. Because Pennsylvania does not have a central entity to control and coordinate flights in and out of its airports, the Philadelphia airport is greatly overused while other airports are underused. This bill is a step in the right direction and I am pleased to support it.”

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on

Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.